REPLY

TO THE

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL,

On WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30th, 1793,

BY

SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

προς τῶ διδαχθεις,
Ου γαρ εκ γε της τυχης. SOPHOCLES.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

REPLY, &c.

THE gradual diffuſion of knowledge, the progreſſive (though ſlow) developement of the rights of the people, the action of both theſe principles on the morals and manners of the human race, and the conſequent addition to the ſtock of * human happineſs; from what cauſes do theſe effects proceed? From the colliſion of ideas, and from the free operation of the powers of the human mind; from re-

* This opinion is contrary to that of Rouſſeau, who, in anſwer to the queſtion propoſed in 1750, by the Academy of Dijon, "Whether the revival of letters in Europe had contributed to the improvement of morals?" contended, that literature was inimical

retroſpective reſearch, and from proſpective reaſoning; from inquiry and from diſcuſſion; from doubt and from diſpute. With theſe ſentiments, it has, indeed, aſtoniſhed me to hear a prelate, at the end of the eighteenth century, gravely aſſert, that he who diſcuſſes "matters of high importance," neceſſarily incurs the imputation of folly. It has, indeed, ſurprized me to hear that "the free-"dom of diſpute, in which, for ſeveral years

to morals, and that the progreſs of ſcience was injurious to the operation of virtue. Rouſſeau was ſucceſsfully anſwered by the King of Poland, d'Alembert, the learned Dr. Parr, the Biſhop of Carliſle, &c. Forced to abandon the arts, Rouſſeau attacked the ſciences, and at length aſſerted, that all civilization was incompatible with the happineſs of the human race, and that a *ſtate of nature* was the only ſtate of felicity. I know of no other author who has ſupported the exiſtence of a ſtate of nature but Cicero; and he ſays, "Quis "enim veſtrûm judices, ignorat, ita naturam rerum "tuliſſe, ut quodam tempore homines, nondum neque "naturali neque civili jure deſcripto, fuſi per agros, "ac diſperſi vagarentur tantumque haberent quantum "manu ac viribus per cædem ac vulnera, aut eripere "aut retinere potuiſſent?" PRO. SEXT. I. 42.

"paſt,

" paſt, it hath been *the folly* * in this coun-
" try to indulge, upon matters of ſuch high
" importance as the origin of government,
" *and the authority of ſovereigns*; the futility
" of the principles which the aſſertors, as
" they have been deemed, of the natural
" rights of men, alledge as the foundation of
" that ſemblance of power, which they would
" be thought willing to leave in the hands of
" the ſupreme magiſtrate, (principles rather
" calculated to *palliate ſedition*, than to pro-
" mote the peace of ſociety, and add to the
" ſecurity of government) this forwardneſs
" to diſpute about the limits of the ſove-
" reign's power, and the extent of the people's
" rights, with this evident deſire, to ſet civil
" authority upon a foundation on which it
" cannot ſtand ſecure, argues, it ſhould
" ſeem, that ſomething is forgotten among

* " Thoſe who employ their pens on political ſub-
" jects cultivate a ſcience which, of all others, con-
" tributes moſt to public utility." HUME's ESSAYS.
—The authority of Hume is at leaſt equal to that of Dr. Horſley.

"the writers, who have presumed to treat "these curious questions."*

The origin of government is a matter of high importance most materially affecting the happiness of the human race, and because it is a matter of high importance, and because it does most materially affect the human race, all inquiry and dispute are not only unnecessary, but even criminal. Pythagoras conceived his assertion to be a sufficient foundation both for conduct and opinion. The Bishop of St. David's thinks so too; and, investing himself with the literary impeccability of the ancient philosophy, bids us recur to the αυτος εφη, and rest contented. It sometimes, however, happens, that the cause of an assertion may be discovered in the assertion itself. In the exordium of his sermon, the Bishop condemns the folly of indulging a freedom of dispute "on matters of such "high importance as the origin of govern-"ment, *and the authority of sovereigns.*"—

* Pages 1 and 2 of Sermon.

This

This approximation of ideas, not immediately connected with each other, may lead ſome to ſuppoſe that the freedom of diſpute on the origin of government is anathematized, only becauſe it may poſſibly implicate an inquiry into the authority of kings; which authority may be found from ſuch inquiry to emanate from, and depend ſolely upon, the conſent of the people; that in them reſides the right of limiting the power of ſovereigns: "that "in them is inherent a ſupreme power to re- "move or alter the legiſlative, when they "find the legiſlative act contrary to the "truſt repoſed in them; for when ſuch truſt "is abuſed, it is thereby forfeited, and de- "volves to thoſe who gave it."* And this argument of the Biſhop of St. David's conducts me to theſe principles (deemed *futile*) which "the aſſertors of the natural rights of "man alledge as the foundation of that ſem- "blance of power which they would be "thought willing to leave in the hands of the "ſupreme magiſtrate."—The only principles which have been maintained by the aſſertors

* Locke.

of

of the rights of man are contained, I believe, in the two following:—1ſt, That all men are born equal, in reſpect of their rights.—2d, That all power proceeds from the people.——Theſe being the principles, the Biſhop of St. David's, in oppoſing them, muſt mean to contend, that men were born unequal, in reſpect of their rights, (a moſt abominable paradox) and that *it* is but the ſemblance, the *ignis fatuus* of power, which the ſupreme magiſtrate poſſeſſes immediately from the people. Hence this conſequence reſults, that the only deſirable and ſubſtantial power is that uſurped by a ſovereign over the people.

It is next aſſerted,* that the aſſertors of the rights of men have forgotten "that the "Chriſtian is poſſeſſed of a written rule of "conduct, and of authentic records of the "firſt ages, which ought to be referred to "upon all queſtions of duty." Theſe records certainly do contain excellent rules of moral conduct, but they do not contain any

* Pages 2 and 3 of the Sermon.

theory

theory of government, which, if reduced to practice, would be productive of ſecurity and happineſs to the human race. They preſent us with a hoſt of miſeries reſulting from the paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance of the people, and from the frightful deſpotiſm of the kings. They foreſee not the probable abuſe of the power poſſeſſed by monarchs, and conſequently provide no remedy for that abuſe; and I cannot avoid being of opinion, that if our conduct had been influenced by the examples with which theſe records furniſh us, we ſhould have been at the preſent period nothing better than a nation of ſlaves.

The remainder of the 3d page of the Sermon, the whole of the 4th, and part of the 5th pages, preſent us with a total miſrepreſentation of the principles of republican writers. The Biſhop of St. David's ought to have known that they expreſsly exclude the ſtate of nature. All the arguments, therefore, reſulting from the ſuppoſed exiſtence of the ſtate, require no anſwer, and are as unſubſtantial as "the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion."

It is next * contended, that the two aſſumptions on which, according to democratic writers, all government is founded, are, firſt, "That the will of a majority obliges the "minority; and ſecond, that the whole poſ-"terity may be bound by the act and deed "of their progenitors." The laſt, however, is not correctly ſtated: it would have been more proper to have ſaid that the whole poſterity may be, *but are not neceſſarily* bound by the act and deed of their progenitors.

The 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and part of the 10th pages, contain very ſound doctrines, to which I accede *totis viribus.* Having placed the rights of the people on a firm foundation, the revolution of 1688 engages the Biſhop of St. David's attention. After ſtating that the act of ſettlement is the whole foundation of the title of the preſent family to the throne of Great Britain, he aſſerts that "† it "is not merely by virtue of that act, that "the ſubject's allegiance is due to him whoſe "claim is founded on it. It is eaſy to under-

* Page 5 of Sermon.
† Pages 10 and 11.

"ſtand,

" ſtand, that the principle of the private citi-
" zen's ſubmiſſion muſt be *quite a diſtinct*
" *thing* from the principle of the ſovereign's
" public title. And for this plain reaſon:
" The principle of ſubmiſſion, to bind the
" conſcience of every individual, *muſt be*
" *ſomething univerſally known, and eaſy to*
" *be underſtood.* The ground of the ſove-
" reign's public title, in governments, in
" which the fabric of the conſtitution is in
" any degree complex and artificial, can be
" known only to the few, who have leiſure
" and ability, and inclination for hiſtorical
" and political reſearches. In this country,
" how many thouſands and ten thouſands of
" the common people never heard of the act
" of ſettlement. Of thoſe to whom the
" name may be familiar, how many have
" never taken the pains to acquire any accu-
" rate knowledge of its contents; yet not
" one of theſe is abſolved from his allegiance
" by his ignorance of his ſovereign's title.
" Where, then, ſhall we find that general
" principle, that binds the duty of allegiance
" equally on all, redde or unredde in the
" ſtatute-book, and in the hiſtory of their
" country? where ſhall we find it but among

" thoſe general rules of duty, which pro-
" ceed immediately from the will of the
" Creator, and have been impreſſed upon the
" conſcience of every man by the original
" conſtitution of the world?"

There is ſomething particularly objection-able in this mode of reaſoning. The Biſhop of St. David's firſt aſſerts, that the act of ſettlement " is the only foundation of the ſove-
" reign's right;" and immediately afterwards contends, " that the principle of the private
" citizen's ſubmiſſion is quite a diſtinct thing
" from the principle of the ſovereign's pub-
" lic title." How the right of a landlord to the receipt of his rent from a tenant can be founded on any other principle than on the goodneſs of his title, I am at a loſs to diſcover. The act of ſettlement placed the people of England under the dominion of William, and yet the " general principle of the
" individual's ſubmiſſion is quite diſtinct." And where are we to find this general principle? " Where," ſays the Biſhop, " but
" among thoſe general rules of duty, which
" proceed immediately from the will of the
" Creator, and have been impreſſed upon the
" con-

" conſcience of every man by the original " conſtitution of the world." But theſe general principles of allegiance could never have received the force of an obligation on the conduct of the people, but for the act of ſettlement; and therefore I am juſtified in aſſerting, that the people's allegiance is founded on that act alone. The Biſhop of St. David's ſeems here ſtrangely to confound cauſe and effect: he ſuppoſes the principles of allegiance to have preceded the act of ſettlement, when, in fact, they ſucceeded it. Again, " if " the principle of ſubmiſſion to bind the " conſcience of every individual muſt be " ſomething univerſally known, and eaſy to " be underſtood," how does the Biſhop of St. David's defend the Revolution?—for the great maſs of the people were acquainted with the general rule of duty that bound them to James the Second; but the principle that bound them to William was, " neither univerſally known, nor eaſy to be " underſtood." But even allowing that the people conceived the conduct of James the Second to have abſolved them from all duty to him, yet it will be remembered that James had children. As the crown was hereditary

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the natural principle that would have firſt entered into the minds of the people, would be that principle, "eaſy to be underſtood," of ſubmiſſion to the ſon of James, who had been guilty of no offence againſt the nation. Let me not, however, by theſe arguments be ſuppoſed to be inimical to the Revolution;—no,—I glory in it. I deteſt the character of James the Second as much as I do that of William the Third;* but I glory in the precedent eſtabliſhed by *caſhiering* the former, and raiſing the latter to the throne: I conſider it as a precedent that—

To the laſt ſyllable of recorded time
has fixed, on a baſis which time ſhall in vain attempt to ſubvert, the SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE.

* The evils produced by the reign of the firſt were temporary; thoſe reſulting from the reign of the laſt, permanent. It will be eaſily underſtood, that I allude to the continental wars in which William engaged this country;---wars, which were the origin of the national debt; and above all, corruption openly avowed, as a neceſſary meaſure of government; a ſyſtem which takes away wiſdom from our counſels, vigour from our arms, and all ſolid ground of reſpect for the popular part of our Conſtitution.

The definition of the Greek word, "ἐξουσιαι," in pages 13 and 14 of the ſermon, is equally "flat, ſtale, and unprofit-"able." Whether the meaning is adequately conveyed by the term, "Perſons "bearing power," or, "Forms of govern-"ment," is of very little conſequence—Thank God, the liberties of mankind depend not upon the meaning of a Greek ſubſtantive.

I come now to the expoſition of St. Paul's reaſoning, in the chapter from which the text is taken:

"Let every ſoul be ſubject to the ſove-"reign powers." The ſovereignty particularly intended, in the immediate application of the precept to thoſe to whom the epiſtle was addreſſed, was the ſovereign authority of the Roman Emperor. Nero was at the time the poſſeſſor of that ſovereignty. And the apoſtle, in what he immediately ſubjoins to enforce his precept, ſeems to obviate an objection, which he was well aware the example of Nero's tyranny might ſuggeſt.

His

His reaſoning is to this effect:

"The ſovereignty, you will ſay, is often placed in unfit hands, and abuſed to the worſt purpoſes. It is placed in the hands of ſenſual, rapacious men, of capricious women, and of *ill-conditioned* boys. It is in ſuch ſort abuſed, as to be made the inſtrument of luſt and ambition, of avarice and injuſtice. You yourſelves, my brethren, experience the abuſe of it in your own perſons. It may ſeem to you, that power, derived from the Author of all Good, would never be ſo miſplaced, nor be permitted to be ſo miſuſed: and you may perhaps be ready to conclude, that the father of lies, once at leaſt, ſpake truth, when he claimed the diſpoſal of earthly ſceptres as his own prerogative. Such reaſonings, ſaith the Apoſtle, are erroneous. No king, however he might uſe or abuſe his authority, ever reigned but by the appointment of God's providence. There is no ſuch thing as power but from God. To him, whatever powers, good or bad, are at any time ſubſiſting in the world, are ſubordinate. He has good ends of his own, not always to be foreſeen by us, to be effected by the abuſe of power, as by other partial evils. And to

his

his own ſecret purpoſe he directs the worſt actions of tyrants, no leſs than the beſt of godly princes. Man's abuſe, therefore, of his delegated authority is to be born with reſignation, like any other of God's judgements. The oppoſition of the individual to the ſovereign power is an oppoſition to God's providential arrangements. And it is the more inexcuſable, becauſe the well-being of mankind is the general end for which government is ordained; and this end of government, under all its abuſes, is *generally* anſwered by it. For the good of government is perpetual and univerſal; the miſchiefs reſulting from the abuſe of power, temporary and partial; inſomuch, that in governments which are the worſt adminiſtered, the ſovereign power, *for the moſt part*, is a terror, not to good works, but to the evil; and upon the whole far more beneficial than detrimental to the ſubject. But this general good of government cannot be ſecured upon any other terms, than the ſubmiſſion of the individual to what may be called its extraordinary evils."*

* Pages 15, 16, and 17, of Sermon.

To this doctrine* I ſhall only reply, that if St. Paul had never inculcated better precepts he would have deſerved the gallows inſtead of canonization. When monarchs wield the ſceptre for the purpoſe of oppreſſing the people, reſiſtance † is not only defenſible, but aſſumes the ſhape of a moral obligation, and common ſenſe teaches us, that as "go-"vernment binds us to obedience only on

* Calvin maintains the ſame doctrine, "Diſci-"mus igitur, exemplo Prophetæ, bene precari pro "inimicis noſtris qui cupiunt nos perditos; maxime "vero precari pro tyrannis; ſi Deo placeat nos ſubjici "eorum libidini; quia, etſi indigni ſint ullo huma-"nitatis officio, quia tamen non præſunt niſi Deo "ita volente, modeſte feramus jugum; neque id "tantum propter iram, ut Paulus admonet, ſed "propter conſcientiam: alioqui non tantum illis ſed "etiam Deo ipſi ſumus rebelles." There is ſome-thing very inconſiſtent in Calvin's character: in ſome parts of his inſtitutes, he inculcates the doctrine of paſſive obedience, and in others, recommends the principle of reſiſtance.

† Non propter regem populus, ſed propter popu-lum rex eſt: ferimus patrem, moroſum etiam et durum, ferimus et regem; ſed ne patrem quidem ferimus tyrannum. Pater ſi filium interficit, capite pœnas dabit. Cur non item rex eâdem juſtiſſimâ lege tene-bitur? *Milton pro populo Anglicano.*

"account

" account of its tendency to public utility,
" that duty muſt always, in extraordinary
" caſes, when public ruin would evidently
" attend obedience, yield to the primary and
" original obligation." *

The Biſhop of St. David's proceeds:

" Such is the general ſcope and tenor of
" the argument, by which St. Paul enforceth
" the duty of the private citizen's ſubjection
" to the ſovereign authority. He never once
" mentions that God of the republican's ido-
" latry, the conſent of the ungoverned mil-
" lions of mankind. He repreſents the
" earthly ſovereign as the vicegerent of God,
" accountable for his conduct to his Hea-
" venly Maſter, but entitled to obedience
" from the ſubject." †

With reſpect to the contempt in which the " conſent of the ungoverned millions of " mankind" is here held, I aſſert, that the

* *Hume's Eſſay on Paſſive Obedience.*

† Page 18 of the Sermon.

Biſhop of St. David's has maintained two doctrines in his ſermon, diametrically oppoſite. In the preceding part * he acknowledges that the conſent of the majority of the people may appoint a new head, and "that of all "ſovereigns, none reign by ſo fair and juſt a "title as thoſe who can derive their claim "from ſuch public act of the nation." In the foregoing quotation, however, he ſeems to think that conſent entirely unneceſſary.

Having ſtated that the *contract* † between the king and people "is ſummarily expreſſed in "the coronation oath; is drawn out at length, "and

* Page 9 of the Sermon.

† I think the acknowledgement of a contract rather weakens the ſovereignty of the people. A contract implies a bargain between two perſons, each poſſeſſing equal rights. A. has an article which B. wants, and which B. purchaſes from A. at a ſtipulated price. Now how can this argument apply to the caſe of a people and a king? The people adopt a monarchical form of government: they elect a ſovereign; they give him ſuch a degree of power as they ſuppoſe to be conſiſtent with the preſervation of their rights and liberties; but they do not ſay to him, "We will give you a crown if you will give us free-

"dom?

" and in detail in the great charter, and the " corroborating ſtatutes; in the petition of " Right, in the *Habeas Corpus* act, in the " Bill of Rights, and in the Act of Settle-" ment,"

He ſays;

" The conſequence, which ſome have at-" tempted to deduce from theſe moſt cer-" tain premiſes, we abominate and reject, as " wicked and illegitimate: namely, that 'our ' kings are the ſervants of the people: and ' that it is the right of the people to caſhier ' them for miſconduct.' " Our anceſtors are " ſlandered! their wiſdom is inſulted! their " virtue is defamed! when theſe ſeditious " maxims are ſet forth as the principles on " which the great buſineſs of the Revolution " was conducted; or as the ground-work, " on which that nobleſt production of human

" dom!—No, ſuch a declaration would be abſurd, becauſe it would be aſking from one who had not the power of compliance that which they poſſeſſed themſelves. The whole power reſides in the people: there is no equality of right between a people and a king, and conſequently there can be no contract.

" reaſon,

" reaſon, the wonderful fabric of the Britiſh " conſtitution, ſtands." *

It is foreign to my intentions to indulge ſuch a pompous parade of invective; but I muſt beg leave to aſk the Biſhop of St. David's a few queſtions:—Firſt, with reſpect to his objection to the poſition, " that our " kings are the ſervants of the people." The Biſhop then muſt mean to contend, that they are the maſters of the people. Does a maſter receive laws from his ſervant? Does a ſervant pay his maſter for ſuffering him to act in that ſubordinate capacity? Does a maſter execute the commands of his ſervant? —No. The ſame mode of argument in all its relations will apply to the kings of England. The executive power reſides in him: the legiſlative right, from which the executive power proceeds, is in the whole nation. The king is bound by particular laws, enacted by the repreſentatives of the people. Let us, therefore, hear no more of kings not being the ſervants of the people: they are the

* Pages 19 and 20 of the Sermon.

ſer-

ſervants * of the people, and I truſt they will continue to be, *in omne volubilis ævum.*— The ſecond poſition to which the Biſhop objects, is, "That it is the right of the people "to caſhier their kings for miſconduct."— He maintains that this is not the principle "on which the great buſineſs of the Revolu-"tion was conducted."—On what other principle was it conducted? James the Second abuſed the power delegated to him. The people offered the crown to William. They declared that James had abdicated the throne, and *they thereby caſhiered him.* There is ſomething ſo clear and ſelf-evident in this propoſition, that the denial of it ſeems to me to deſerve an epithet rather more harſh than that of abſurd.

The Biſhop of St. David's, as might be expected, now avails himſelf of the opportunity of fulminating againſt France. Speaking of her former ſituation, he aſſerts, that ſhe "was once great in learning, arts, and

* It is a fact not generally known, that James the Firſt, who was not *a very great enemy* to royal prerogative, acknowledged, at his acceſſion to the throne, *that he was only the ſervant of the people.*

"arms!

" arms! Now torn by contending factions!
" Her government demoliſhed! Her altars
" overthrown! Her firſt-born deſpoiled of
" their birth-right! Her nobles degraded!
" Her beſt citizens exiled! Her riches, ſacred
" and profane, given up to the pillage of
" ſacrilege and rapine! Atheiſts directing her
" councils! Deſperadoes conducting her ar-
" mies! Wars of unjuſt and chimerical am-
" bition conſuming her youth! Her gra-
" naries exhauſted! Her fields uncultivated!
" Famine threatening her multitudes! Her
" ſtreets ſwarming with aſſaſſins,* filled
" with violence, deluged with blood!" †

Such is the picture, and frightful, indeed, it would be, if the outlines were correctly copied.—The following may, perhaps, approach nearer to nature. A nation, great in learning, arts, and arms—now ſuffering by contending factions—a temporary evil attendant on all revolutions—a deſpotic, abominable government demoliſhed—Baſtilles de-

* The Biſhop of St. David's alludes to the murder of Pelletier de St. Fargeau, by Paris.

† Page 22 of Sermon.

ſtroyed—The partial and unjuſt law of primogeniture (which involved the greateſt part of a family in poverty and ruin, for the purpoſe of ſupporting one branch of it in affluence) aboliſhed—Her nobles no longer enabled to prey like vultures upon the vitals of the people—The profligate paraſites of her court exiled—Her riches, ſacred and profane, rendered uſeful to the people—Sages directing her councils—Heroes conducting her armies—Her youth offering up their blood at the altar of freedom—Her granaries exhauſted for the public good.

The Biſhop proceeds in his invective—

"Is the picture frightful? Is the miſery "extreme? the guilt horrid? Alas, theſe, "theſe things were but the prelude of the "tragedy! Public juſtice poiſoned in its "ſource! profaned, in the abuſe of its moſt "ſolemn forms, to the foulеſt purpoſes! A "monarch deliberately murdered! A monarch—whoſe only crime it was, that he "inherited a ſceptre, the thirty-ſecond of his "illuſtrious ſtock,---butchered on a public

"ſcaf-

"ſcaffold, after the mockery of arraign-
"ment, trial, ſentence! Butchered, without
"the merciful formalities of the vileſt ma-
"lefactor's execution!"*

This eloquent pathos may receive the approbation of thoſe whoſe intereſt may lead them to be acceſſaries to the continuance of error: but the man who dares to think for himſelf, it muſt diſguſt. I ſuppoſe, that the Biſhop of St. David's does not mean to contend, that the people of France poſſeſſed no right of bringing their monarch to a trial. With this ſuppoſition I proceed:—"A monarch deliberately "murdered! A monarch——whoſe only "crime it was, that he inherited a ſceptre, "the thirty-ſecond of his illuſtrious ſtock." ——Is not this a moſt groſs miſrepreſentation? Will the moſt violent enemies of the French contend, that the late king was executed, becauſe he was the thirty-ſecond deſcendant of Hugh Capet? No.—I believe

* Page 23 of Sermon.

no

no one but the Biſhop of St. David's will make ſuch an aſſertion.—He was executed for having invaded the peace and ſecurity of the kingdom.—He was executed for having abuſed the confidence repoſed in him.—He was executed for having lifted his arm againſt the people.—He was executed for having ſworn to maintain the conſtitution adopted by the nation, and for having violated his oath.*——For theſe crimes, proved

* Let it not be ſaid, that as the oath was extorted from him, the violation of it was no crime. —The nation, reſolving to place a certain degree of power in his hands, poſſeſſed the right of extorting from him an oath, that ſhould bind him not to abuſe that power: to which oath, if he did not adhere, he deſerved puniſhment. And with reſpect to the argument, that an oath extorted may be violated, it muſt be apparent that he who takes an oath apparently from inclination, and from ſubſequent circumſtances feels it to be his intereſt to break it, may eſcape puniſhment in the ſimpleſt manner poſſible, viz, by aſſerting that the oath was extorted from him.—James the Second, at his acceſſion, ſwore to maintain "the government as by law eſtabliſhed, both in church "and ſtate." He did not adhere to his oath. But would it have been ſufficient for him to have ſaid, in excuſe for his attack upon the liberties of the people, that his oath to maintain thoſe liberties had been extorted from him?

againſt him, he was executed, and I THINK he DESERVED his DEATH.*

After ſome moſt deſerved praiſes on the King, who fills the throne of England, the Biſhop of St. David's returns thanks to God, that the church of England has ever been conſpicuous "for ſubmiſſion to the ſovereign "powers, and for brotherly love."—But, "perhaps," he ſays, "in the exerciſe of "brotherly love, it is the *amiable infirmity* "of Engliſhmen to be too eaſy to admit the "claim of a ſpiritual kindred.†"—Notwith-

* I am ſenſible it will be ſaid, that the conſtitution of France expreſsly declared, that for the ſpecific crimes adduced againſt the king of the French, abdication ſhould be the puniſhment. I ſuppoſe that the caſhiering of James was not warranted by the law of the land: but it muſt be recollected, that there is a principle paramount to all law, that of general ſecurity. When obedience to a law would produce conſequences ſubverſive of the public happineſs and ſecurity, I aſſert that law is not, and ought not to be obligatory on the conduct of the people.—By this mode of reaſoning muſt the caſhiering of James be defended.

† Page 24 of the Sermon.

ſtanding he characterizes the infirmity as amiable, it is evident, by the ſucceeding periods, that this eaſy admiſſion of the claim affords him no ſmall uneaſineſs.

" The times compel me to remark, that " brotherly love embraces only brethren. " The term of holy brotherhood is profaned " by an indiſcriminate application. We " ought to mark thoſe who cauſe diviſions " and offences. Nice ſcruples about exter- " nal forms, and differences of opinion upon " controvertible points, cannot but take place " among the beſt Chriſtians, and diſſolve " not the fraternal tie. None, indeed, at " this ſeaſon are more entitled to our of- " fices of love, than thoſe, with whom the " difference is wide, in points of doctrine, " diſcipline, and external rites; *thoſe vene-* " *rable exiles, the prelates and clergy* * of " the

* I am ſure, it is not my intention to impute to the exiled clergy of France any but the moſt honourable motives; but I muſt be permitted to ſay, that their emigration affords no ground of accuſation againſt the French government. There are two acts which the clergy alledge to be unjuſt. The firſt is the ſeizure of

" the fallen church of France, endeared to
" us by the edifying example they exhibit,
" of patient ſuffering for conſcience ſake.—
" But if any, enjoying the bleſſings of the
" Britiſh government, living under the pro-
" tection of its free conſtitution, and its
" equal laws, have DARED to avow the
" WICKED ſentiment, that this day of na-
" tional contrition, this rueful day of guilt
" and ſhame, 'is a PROUD day for England,
" to be remembered as ſuch by the lateſt
" poſterity of freemen,' with ſuch perſons
" it is meet that we abjure all brotherhood.
" Their ſpot is not the ſpot of our family.
" They have no claim upon our brotherly
" affection. Upon our charity they have in-

of the church lands; the ſecond, the impoſition of the civic oath.—With regard to the firſt, the clergy not poſſeſſing the fee-ſimple of the lands, the nation had a right to reſume the poſſeſſion of them, and to grant annuities in lieu of the rents of theſe lands. With reſpect to the ſecond, I certainly agree, that teſts in religion are deteſtable; but a political teſt ſtands in a very different relation. A nation poſſeſſes an undoubted right to demand an oath of attachment, to the form of government under which it may pleaſe the people to live, from all to whom the executive power may be entruſted.

" deed

" deed a claim. Miſerable men! 'They " are in the gall of bitterneſs and in the bond " of iniquity.' It is our duty to pray God, " if perhaps the thought of their heart may " be forgiven them."*

Such is the concluding ſentiment of the Biſhop of St. David's diſcourſe; and a ſentiment more ſhocking, more repugnant to the principles of that religion, which bids us conſider thoſe who differ in opinion with us, "not as enemies, but as brothers," never was uttered by the moſt bigoted ſupporter of the inquiſition.

" Miſerable men! 'They are in the gall " of bitterneſs and in the bond of iniquity.' " It is our duty to pray God, if perhaps " the thought of their heart may be forgiven " them."

Oh, horrible reflection! a tyrant falls, and the miniſters of God "lament, even unto "anguiſh," over his grave! A whole people put an end to the warfare of tyranny, and

* Pages 24 and 25 of the Sermon.

the

the miniſters of peace pour upon them fulminations and anathemas!—The veil of ſuperſtition is torn from the face of religion by the hand of philoſophy, and prelates ſtamp upon the deed the epithet of "accurſed!"

There was, unhappily, a time when ſuch fulminations and ſuch anathemas would have deluged the earth with blood. Thanks to God, their operation has ceaſed. But not to the teachers of religion is the praiſe of arreſting their operation to be attributed;—not to the miniſters of the goſpel do we owe the bleſſings of being liberated from the bond of deſpotiſm and the yoke of ſuperſtition.—— "Theſe," oh, philoſophy, "theſe are thy "glorious works!" Protected by thy influence, and fearleſs of the Biſhop of St. David's threatened abjuration of brotherhood, there are, I truſt, thouſands who "dare "avow the wicked ſentiment, that this day "of national contrition, this rueful day of "guilt and ſhame, 'is a PROUD day for "England, to be remembered as ſuch by "the lateſt poſterity of freemen." But ſhould there not be one——ſhould I traverſe the ſuperficies of the globe, and find the ſentiment

ment "abhorred of all," yet would I dare avow it, I would dare avow, that it is one of the proudeſt days that England ever ſaw, and if it were poſſible, which it is not, if it were poſſible that any future monarch of England ſhould, like the firſt Charles, lift his arm againſt the people, I truſt that there would be found virtue and patriotiſm enough among them to inflict upon him ſuch a puniſhment as ſuch a crime would deſerve!

THE END.

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